



Town of Belmont

Belmont Center Parking Study

Thursday, February 2, 2012



Belmont Comprehensive Plan – 2010-2020

Belmont Comprehensive Plan 2010-2020

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Proximity to strong commercial areas in greater Boston makes it difficult for Belmont's commercial centers to compete
- Resistance to new development in commercial areas hinders commercial economic growth
- Various regulatory constraints inhibit new commercial development which could enhance the Town centers and the commercial tax base



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Support policies, programs and events that increase the competitiveness of local businesses.
 - Encourage the formation of local business organizations, public/private partnerships, and the accessibility and connectivity of the Town's commercial centers
- Encourage new and infill development, as well as reuse of existing buildings, which enhances the character and quality of the Town's commercial areas.
 - Review and amend zoning and other regulations to support development, redevelopment, and renovation which promotes appropriately scaled and located commercial uses, mixed uses, and housing
- Encourage increased use of public transit
 - Increase parking available to commuters and encourage higher density residential development in walking distance to commercial centers and transit
- Improve the physical appearance of commercial areas
 - Foster improvements through the public and private sectors to streetscapes, public open spaces, pedestrian and bicycle connections, as well as parking and traffic flow

Commuters

- Identify areas at the edges of village centers for permitted commuter parking; dedicate revenues to lease program or for streetscape and sidewalk improvements in residential neighborhoods that allow on-street commuter parking.
- Create safe, attractive walking connections from remote parking to stations.

Belmont Comprehensive Plan 2010-2020

Public/private collaboration and investments are needed to promote improvement of signs and facades and commercial buildings.

- Refine signage guidelines, potentially as a component of design guidelines.
- Create a resource guide for existing businesses including desired suggestions and examples for new signage and facades.
- Explore possible incentives to encourage property owners to update their properties (low interest construction loan rates, real estate tax credits)
- Explore private funding through local financial institutions
- Explore public funding options
- Develop positive program and schedule meetings with landlords to discuss renovation needs

Develop a parking management plan for each commercial center.

A parking management program would focus on maximizing on-street parking capacity, prioritizing and encouraging more efficient use of public and private parking areas, while prioritizing parking for patrons.

- Consider shopping groceries parking zone near strategy
- Establish remote employee permit parking areas.
- Consider installing reverse angle parking where appropriate to increase curbside parking supply
- Limit loading zone hours

"Business friendly" parking policies would provide a more positive experience for shoppers.

- Provide clear signage indicating parking options.
- Increase time limits to avoid ticketing.
- Use enforcement personnel to "assist" consumers first and enforce regulations second.

The Town can capitalize on the economic value of parking within and near the commercial centers and transit stations to support businesses and enhance neighborhood transitions.

- Consider dedicating surplus parking revenues to local improvements as decided by local business community.
- Consider dedicating surplus revenues to residential neighborhoods that allow on-street parking

Support policies, programs, and events that increase the competitiveness of local businesses

A more business friendly approach can help the Town to attract and retain businesses.

- Propose modifications to regulations and permitting processes to relieve barriers to commercial development or re-zoning.
- Assist commercial areas in promoting their services.
- Keep a single tax rate.
- Investigate potential for tax credit for property.
- Address issues of town services (e.g. snow and

The Town can partner with local businesses and development.

- Encourage formation of business organizations to a private/public organization authority, conditions and experience of the common marketing promotions and feasibility of creating a Business Imp

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Lack of Transportation Options

- 85% of Belmont's workforce commutes to a different city or town each day
- 50% commute to Boston or Cambridge
- The majority commute by car
- Very few can take advantage of the existing transit system

Parking Management

- Commercial development in Town centers is hindered by limited parking options for customers, employees, and commuters
- Difficult to balance parking while sustaining neighborhood character

Energy

- Difficult to reduce Town's energy consumption on a broad scale



Guiding Principles

- Provide convenient parking for *customers*
- *Protect residential neighborhoods* from spillover
- Establish clear *employee parking* areas
- Accommodate *commuter parking* appropriately

Developing a Parking Management Plan



Parking Management Plan

Issues

Best Practices

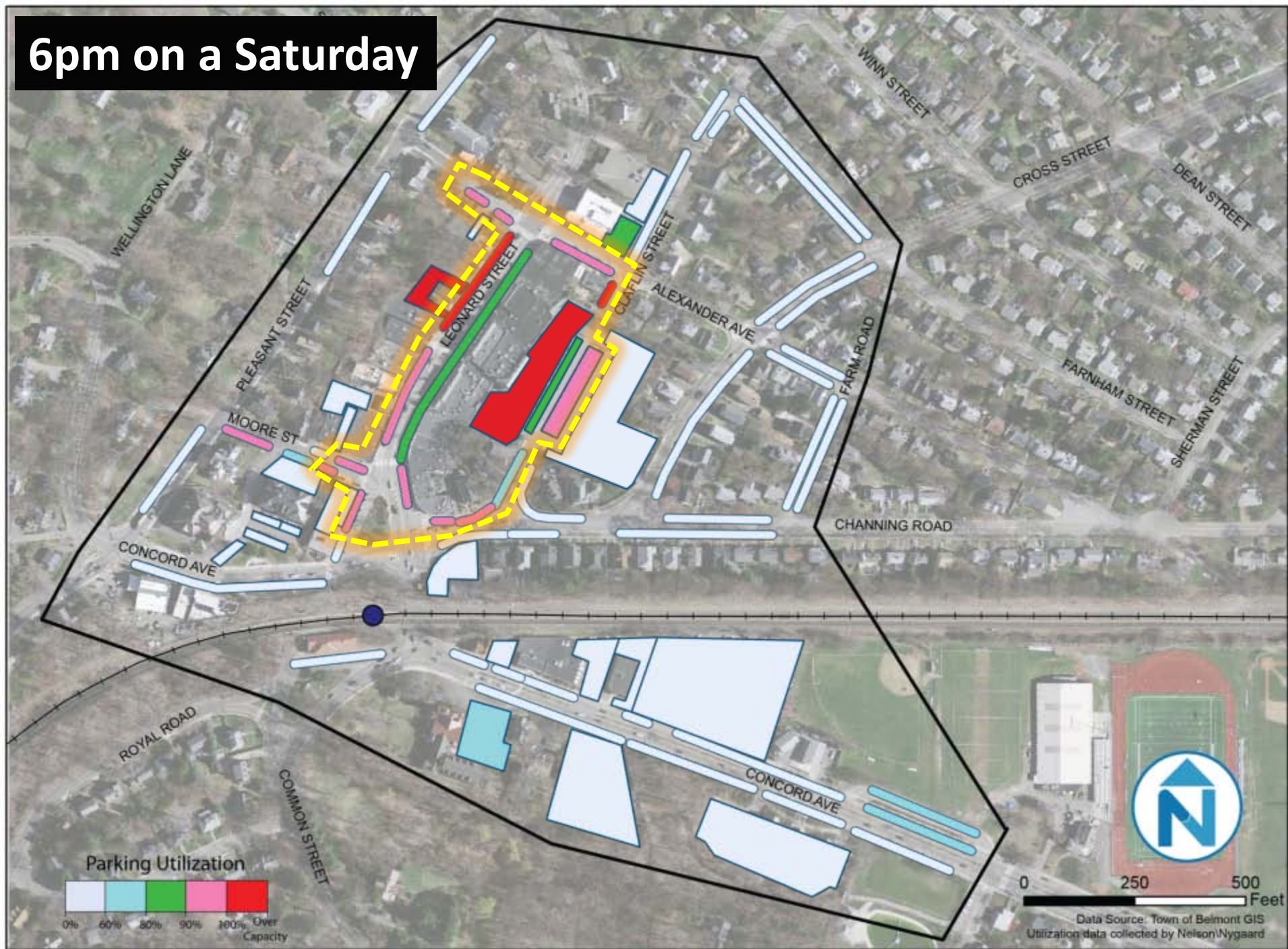
Recommendations

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find



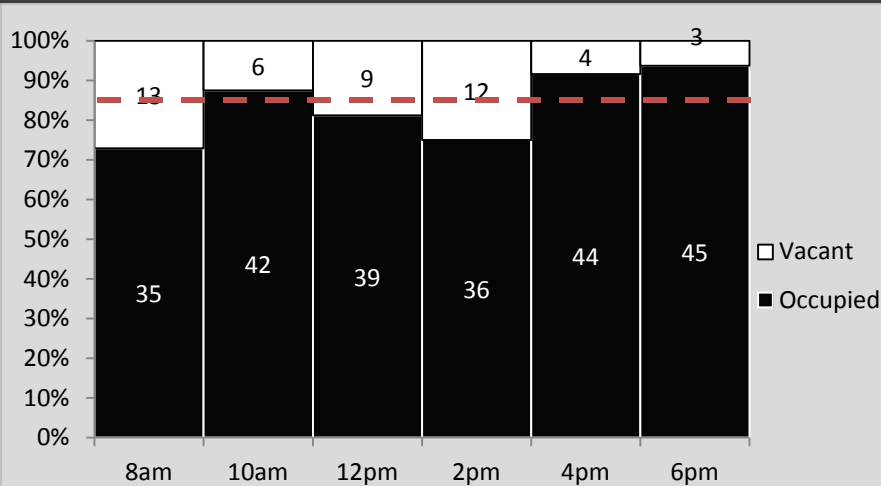


6pm on a Saturday

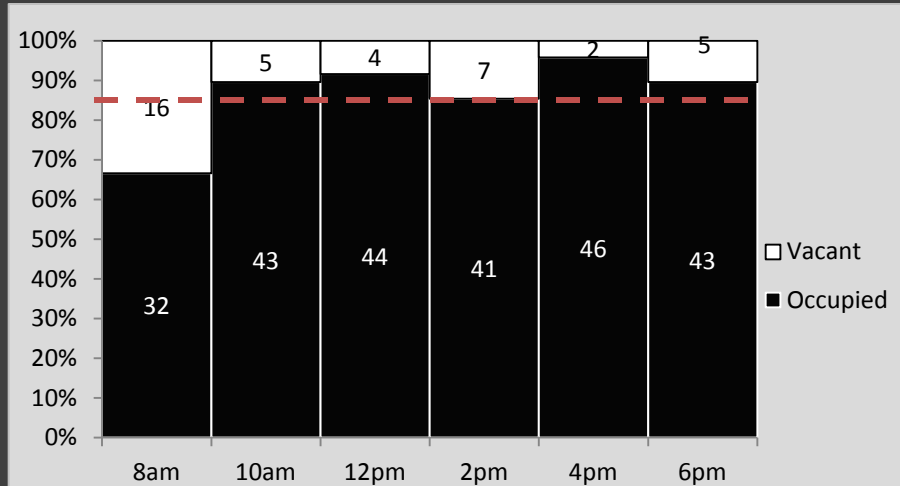


Customer Parking

Leonard Street Availability



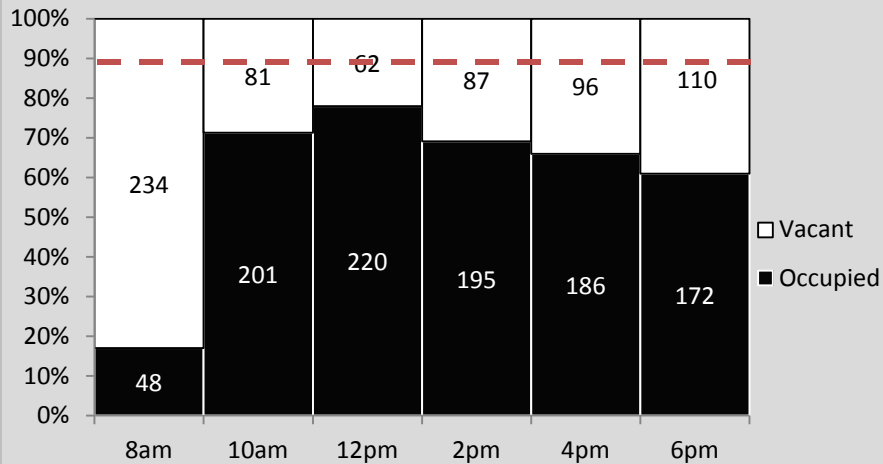
Thursday



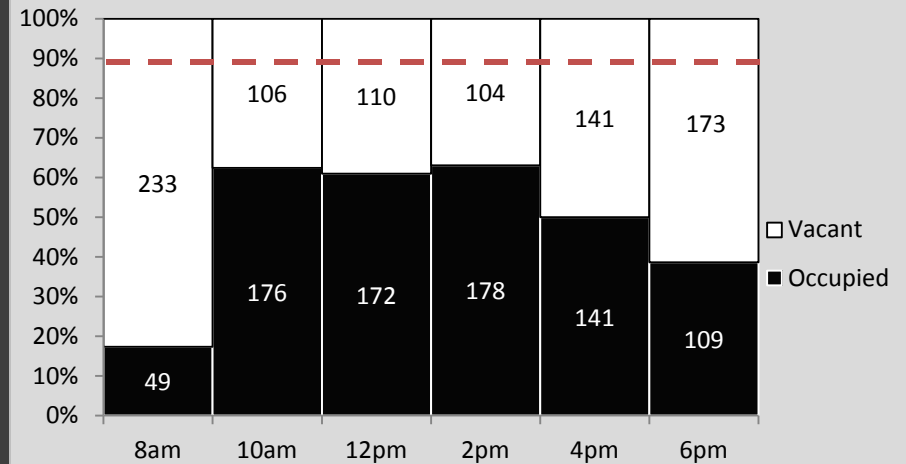
Saturday

Customer Parking

Claflin Lot Availability



Thursday



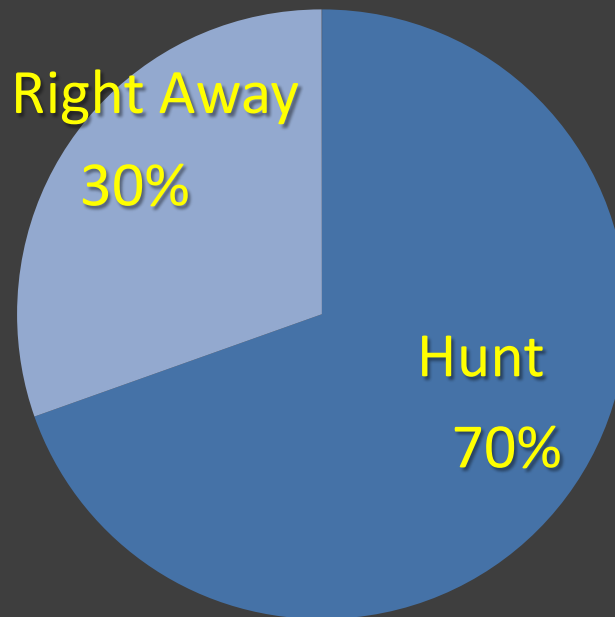
Saturday

Customer Parking

Intercept Surveys:

Weekend Off-Street Parkers:

“Did you find a space right away or search?”



Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find

Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management

Recommendations

Example: Nashua, NH

Goals

- Raise money for downtown improvements
- More availability for customers



City doubled parking fees to \$1/hour at meters on and off Main St.

BLUE ZONE
\$0.75/hr

[illegible]

Example: Nashua, NH

Merchant Reactions to Parking Changes:

- “Without *turnover of customers*, we’re all dead downtown”
- “The *availability of spaces* for those wishing to conduct business downtown have *increased dramatically* and it certainly helped Christmas sales”
- “Many all-day parkers have *changed their habits* due to the new regulations, therefore *benefiting businesses*”
- “When *spaces are locked up all day long*, it just doesn’t help you in any way”
- “It was like *winning the lottery* – it used to be so hard for us to find a space”

Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find
2. Lack of attractive employee parking

Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management

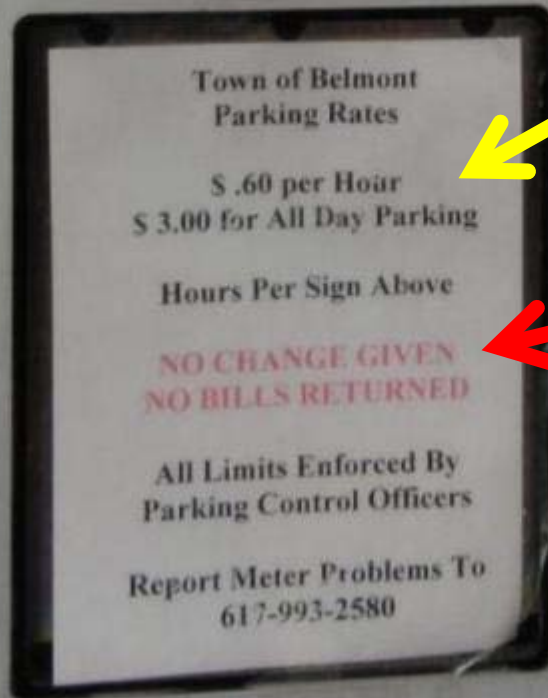
Recommendations



Employee Parking



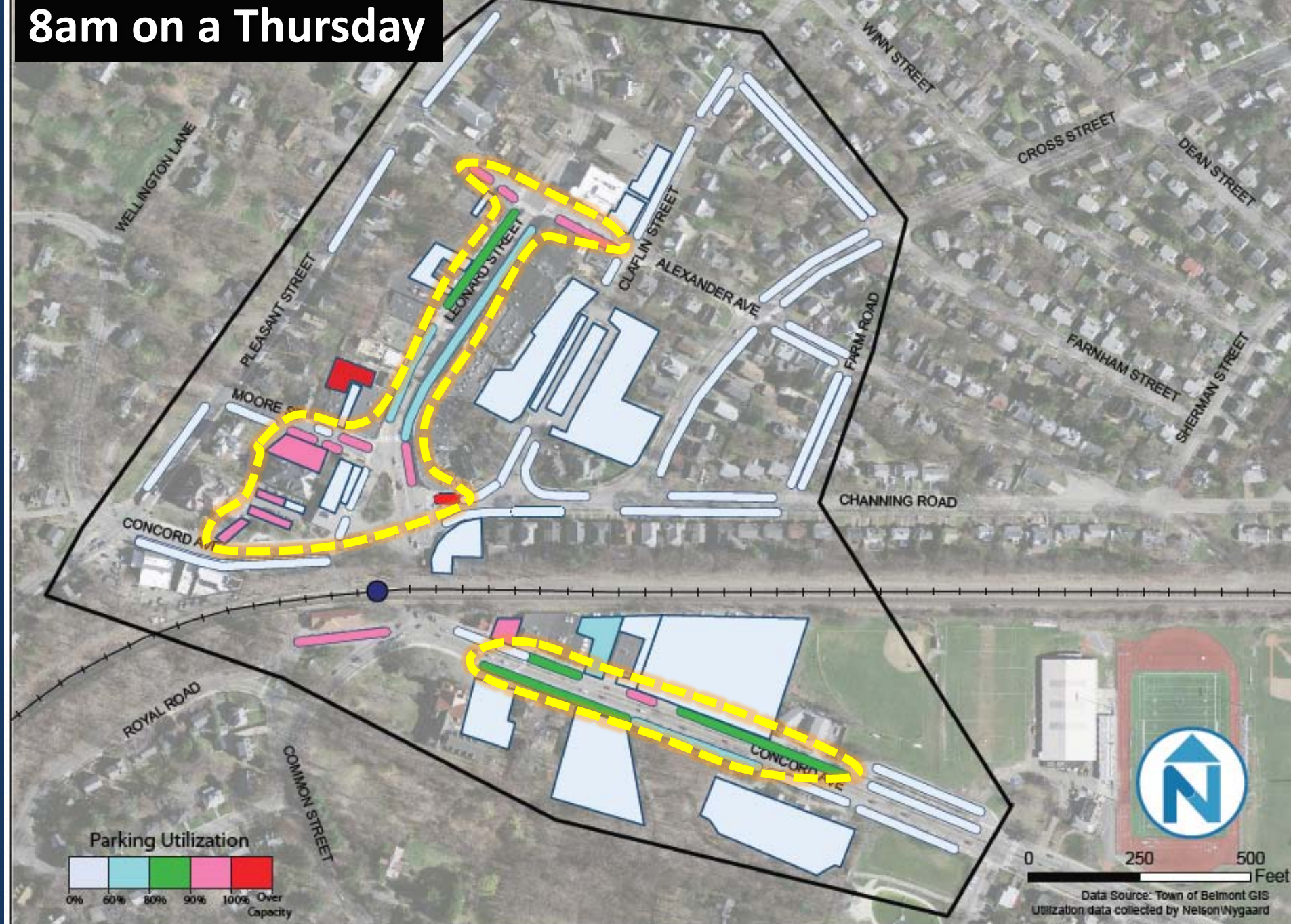
Employee Parking



Employee Parking

Employees often
occupy spaces on prime
streets

8am on a Thursday



Employee Parking

Signing and encouragement has not changed behavior





Employee Parking

Aggressive enforcement has not changed behavior

Sends the wrong message to customers



REDWOOD CITY
**Downtown
Parking Map**

**FREE PARKING
EVENINGS &
WEEKENDS**

**County
Garage**

San Mateo
County
Government
Center



LEGEND

- FREE** every evening and all day Saturday and Sunday
(see signs at these facilities for details)
- 25¢ per hour**, Monday - Friday, 10am to 6pm
(FREE after 6:00pm and all day Saturday and Sunday)
- 25¢ per hour**, Monday - Saturday, 10am to 6pm
(FREE after 6:00pm and all day Sunday)
- 50¢ per hour**, Monday - Saturday, 10am to 6pm
(FREE after 6:00pm and all day Sunday)
- First 1.5 hours FREE** or
First 4 hours FREE with a validation from Century Theatres
(see signs at these facilities for details)

Example: Redwood City, CA

- #4: Modify the Parking Permit Program
 - To accommodate employees, crafted a parking permit program for spaces in garages with varying levels of access for purchase



Permit Type	Valid Locations and Times	Monthly Cost
Marshall / Middlefield BRONZE	Marshall Garage: Monday - Friday, 6am until 7pm Middlefield Lot: Monday - Friday, 6am until 7pm	\$30.00
Marshall / Middlefield SILVER	Marshall Garage: Monday - Friday, 6am until Midnight Middlefield Lot: Monday - Friday, 6am until 7pm	\$35.00
Marshall / Middlefield GOLD	Marshall Garage: Monday - Sunday, 6am until Midnight Middlefield Lot: Monday - Friday, 6am until 7pm	\$40.00

Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find
2. Lack of attractive employee parking

Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts

Recommendations





A NEW OLD PASADENA COMING SOON

STREET AND ALLEY WAY IMPROVEMENTS:

LIGHTING

REPAVING

TRASH RECEPTACLES

SIGNS AND BENCHES

DIRECTORY MAPS

TREES AND GRATES

NEWSRACKS

MAINTENANCE

SAFETY

**YOUR METER MONEY IS
MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

THE OLD PASADENA RENAISSANCE CONTINUES

CITY OF PASADENA









Old Town Pasadena Parking Benefit District

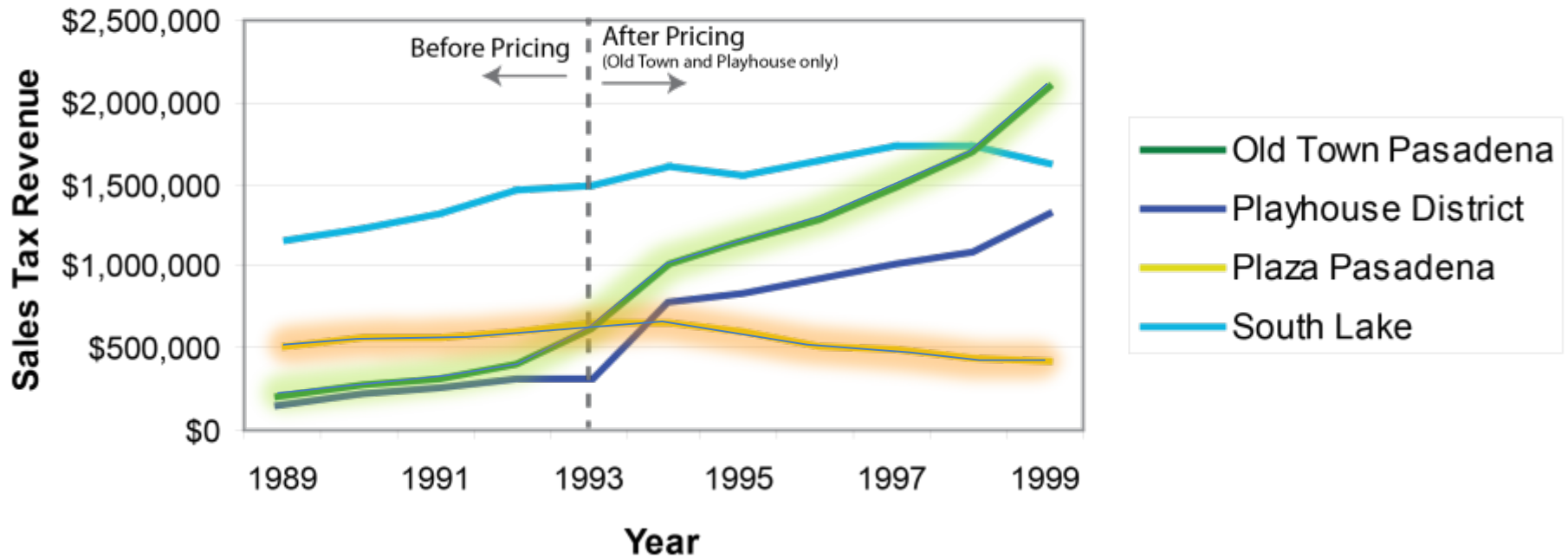
- Meters installed in 1993:
\$1/hour
- Revenue today (including parking garages):
\$5.4 million annually
- Funds garages, street furniture, trees, lighting, marketing, mounted police, daily street sweeping & steam cleaning



The meters yield about
\$50 per front foot per year

**Old Pasadena, 1992-99:
Sales Tax Revenues Quadruple**

Pasadena Retail Sales Tax Revenue



Downtown Opportunities – Landscape Greening



Lessons Learned

- Dedicate surplus parking revenues to where they were produced
- Merchants will insist on charging market prices for curb parking
- Parking revenues can greatly improve public infrastructure



Parking benefit districts

Commercial:

- Ann Arbor, MI
- Oak Park, IL
- Pasadena, CA
- San Diego, CA
- Redwood City, CA
- Seattle, WA

Commercial & Residential:

- Washington, DC
- Aspen, CO
- Boulder, CO
- Santa Cruz, CA
- Tucson, AZ
- West Hollywood, CA
- Austin, TX

Convenient Technology

MULTI-SPACE PAY AND DISPLAY

- One meter serves multiple spaces, user displays receipt on dashboard
- Benefits:
 - Increases revenue
 - Reduces operations and enforcement cost
 - More payment options



Convenient Technology

MULTI-SPACE PAY BY SPACE

- One meter serves multiple spaces
- Benefits:
 - Same as Pay and Display
 - No need to return to car
 - Easy incorporation of Cell Phone payment options



Convenient Technology

MULTI-SPACE PAY BY SPACE

Lowell, MA

- 40 percent increase in collections
- 20 – 35 percent decrease in operations and enforcement costs



Pay by space post – Montreal

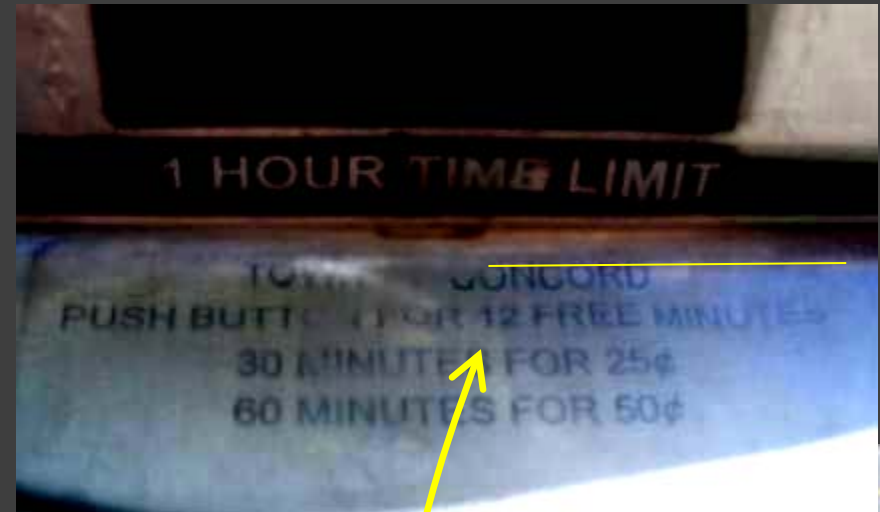
Image Credit: Flickr User [Solsken](#)



Convenient Technology

FIRST FEW MINUTES FREE BUTTON

- Button on meter allows for 10 – 15 free minutes
- Benefits:
 - Improves customer parking availability for short-term trips



Concord, MA



Convenient Technology

IN-CAR METERS

- Motorists display paid time on device in car
- Benefits:
 - Users only pay for time used
 - Good for frequent parkers



Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find
2. Lack of attractive employee parking

Best Practices

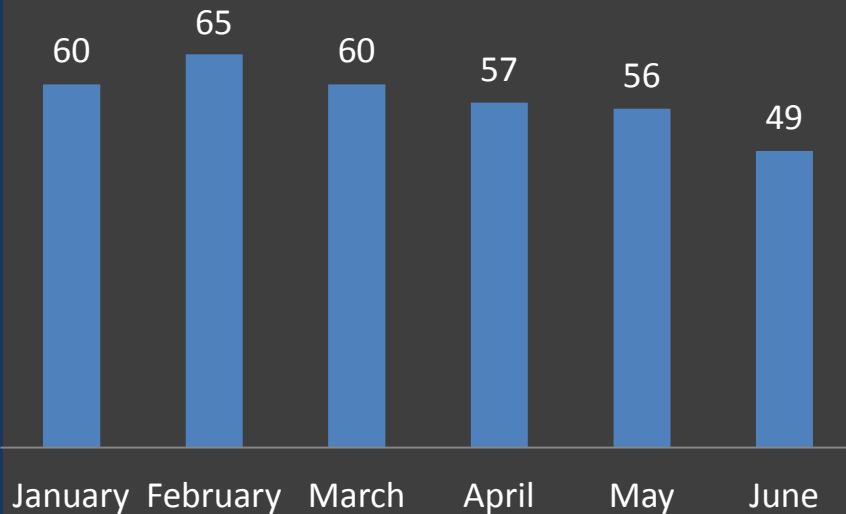
1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits

Revise Employee Permits

Permit Sales by Month 2011



Work days per month 20

Monthly permit \$60

Cost per day \$3

Cost per day (cash) \$3

Little/no incentive to buy permits

Revise Employee Permits

- Improve convenience for employees to utilize remote parking



In-Car Meters



Pay by Space Meters

Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find
2. Lack of attractive employee parking

Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits
2. Establish more convenient customer parking



Y'S HOUSE OF PIZZA

GREGORY'S
HOUSE OF
PIZZA

PIZZA

BELMONT CENTER
DRY CLEANERS

Bessie Blue







\$1.00

15 min free

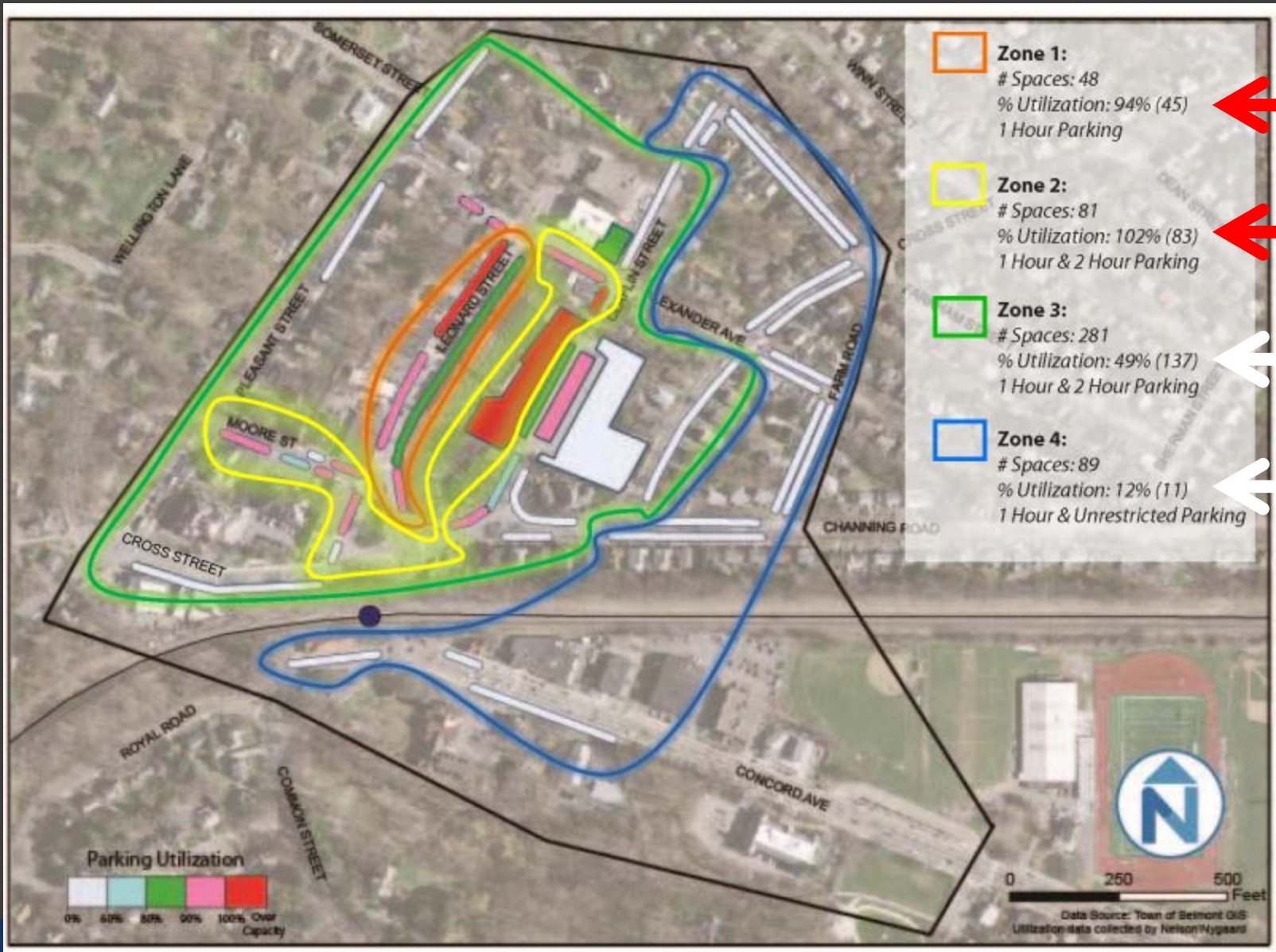
\$0.50

30 min free

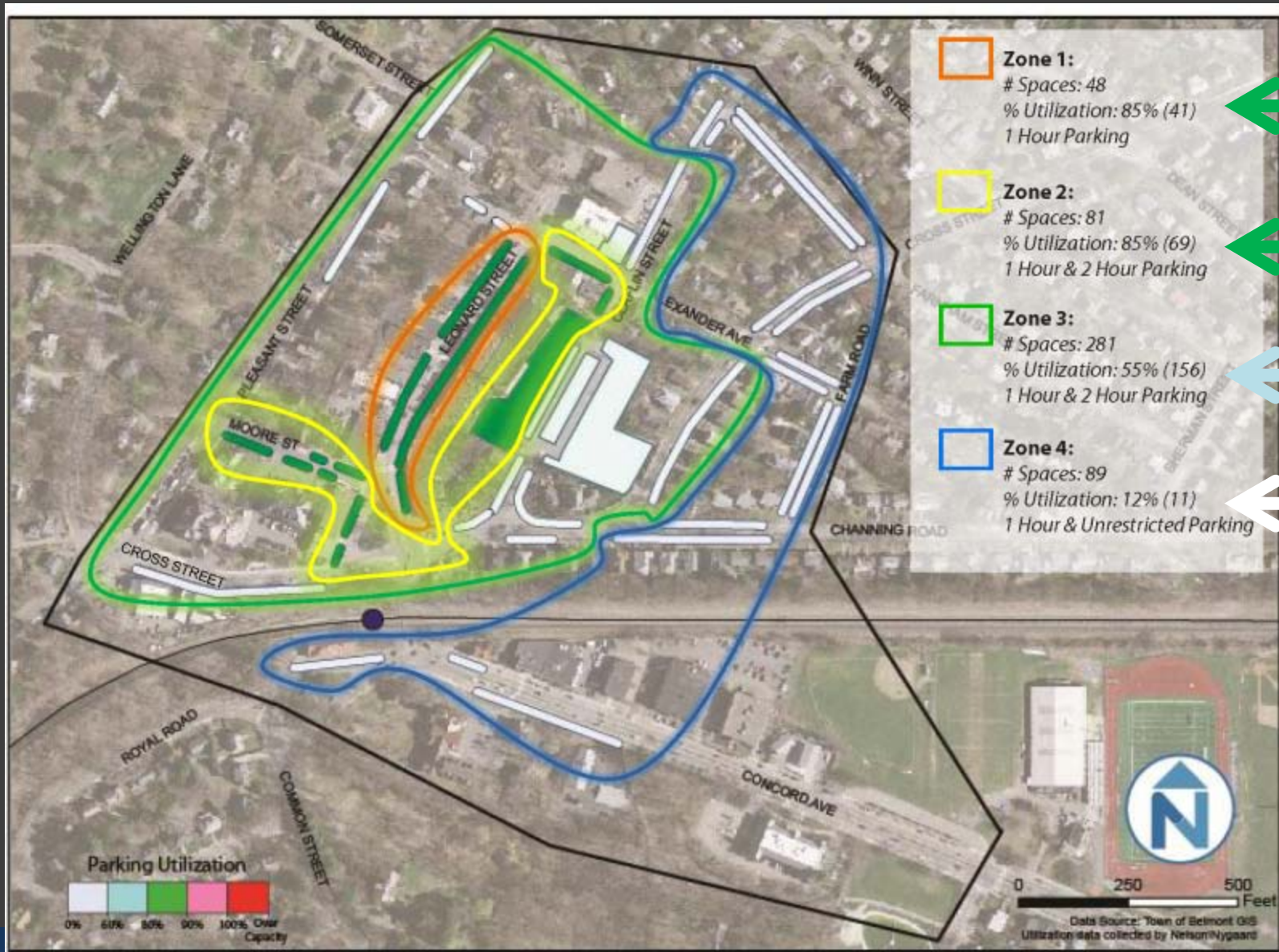
\$0.25

\$0/Permit

Utilization and Spillover



Utilization and Spillover



Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find
2. Lack of attractive employee parking
3. No designated commuter parking

Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits
2. Establish more convenient customer parking



Commuter Parking

No designated
commuter
parking



Royal Road

Unregulated
prime
spaces at
station



Commuter Parking – Royal Road



Many underutilized on-street spaces that could be used for commuter parking

Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find
2. Lack of attractive employee parking
3. No designated commuter parking

Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts
3. On-street commuter parking

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits
2. Establish more convenient customer parking

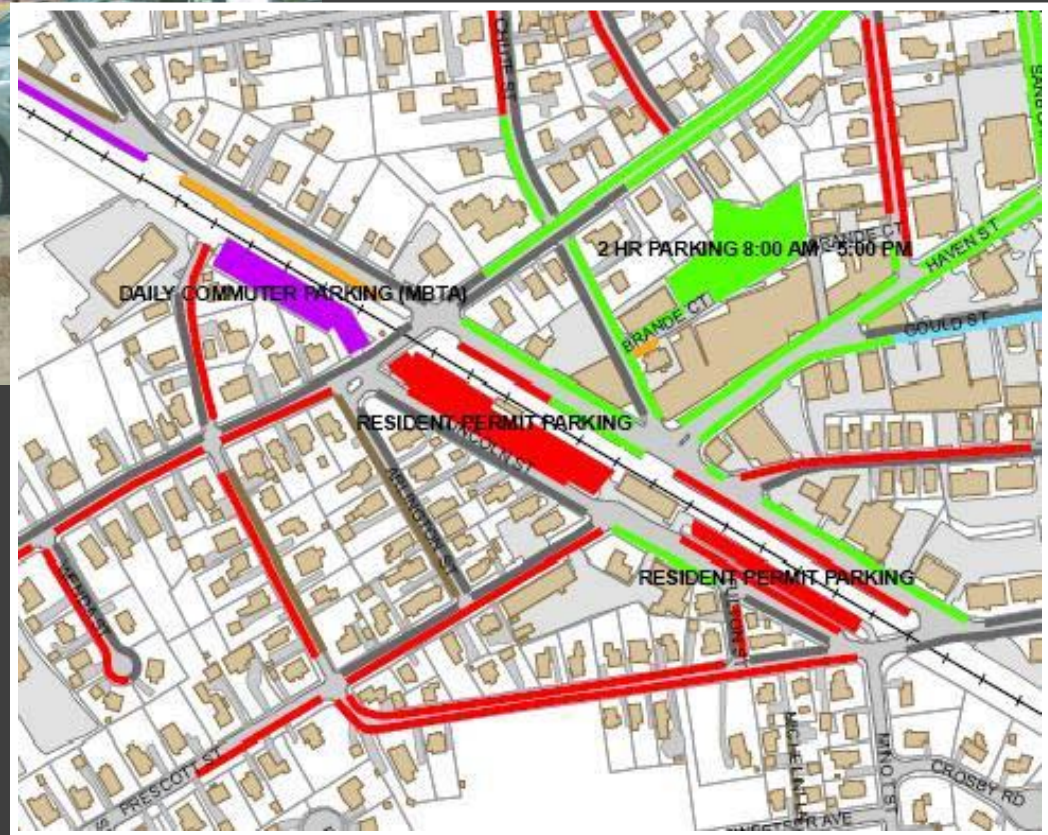
West Medford



West Medford



Reading



On-Street Parking: Traffic Calming

- Study of over 250 CT streets
- Various street types based on speed limits, adjacent land uses, and presence of on-street parking
- **Cars drove slower on roads that had on-street parking**
- **These streets had a lower fatality and accident rate**

Amherst Center Parking Map

Lots & meters \$.50 per hour. Fees in effect Monday-Saturday during posted times. Click on the map for more info.

Legend

Parking

Public Parking Lots

-  Parking Lot
-  Boltwood Garage

Parking Spots

-  2 Hour Metered Parking
-  5 Hour Metered Parking
-  9 Hour Metered Parking
-  Town Center Permit Parking
-  Resident Only Permit Parking



Amherst

Parking Management Plan

Issues

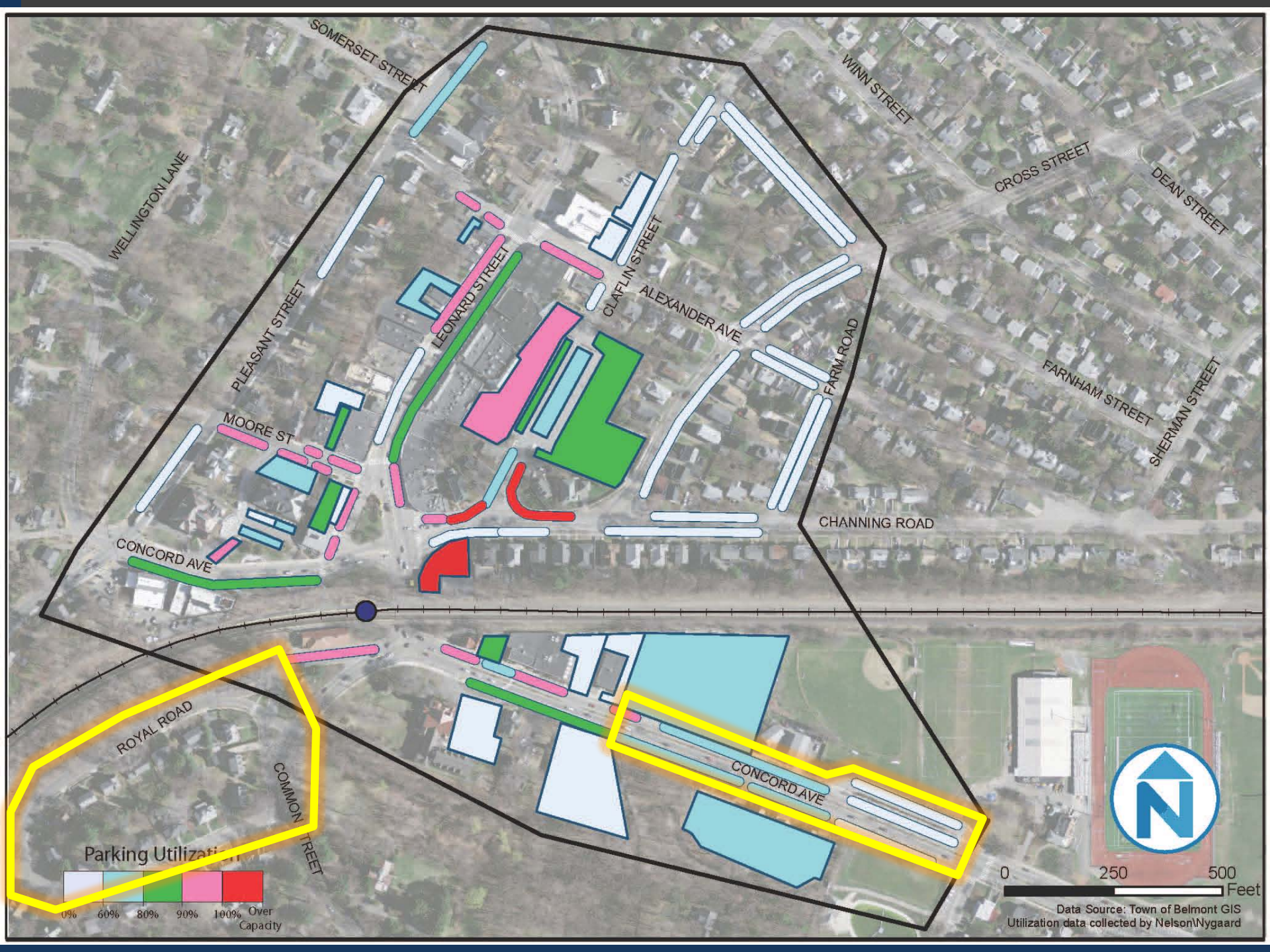
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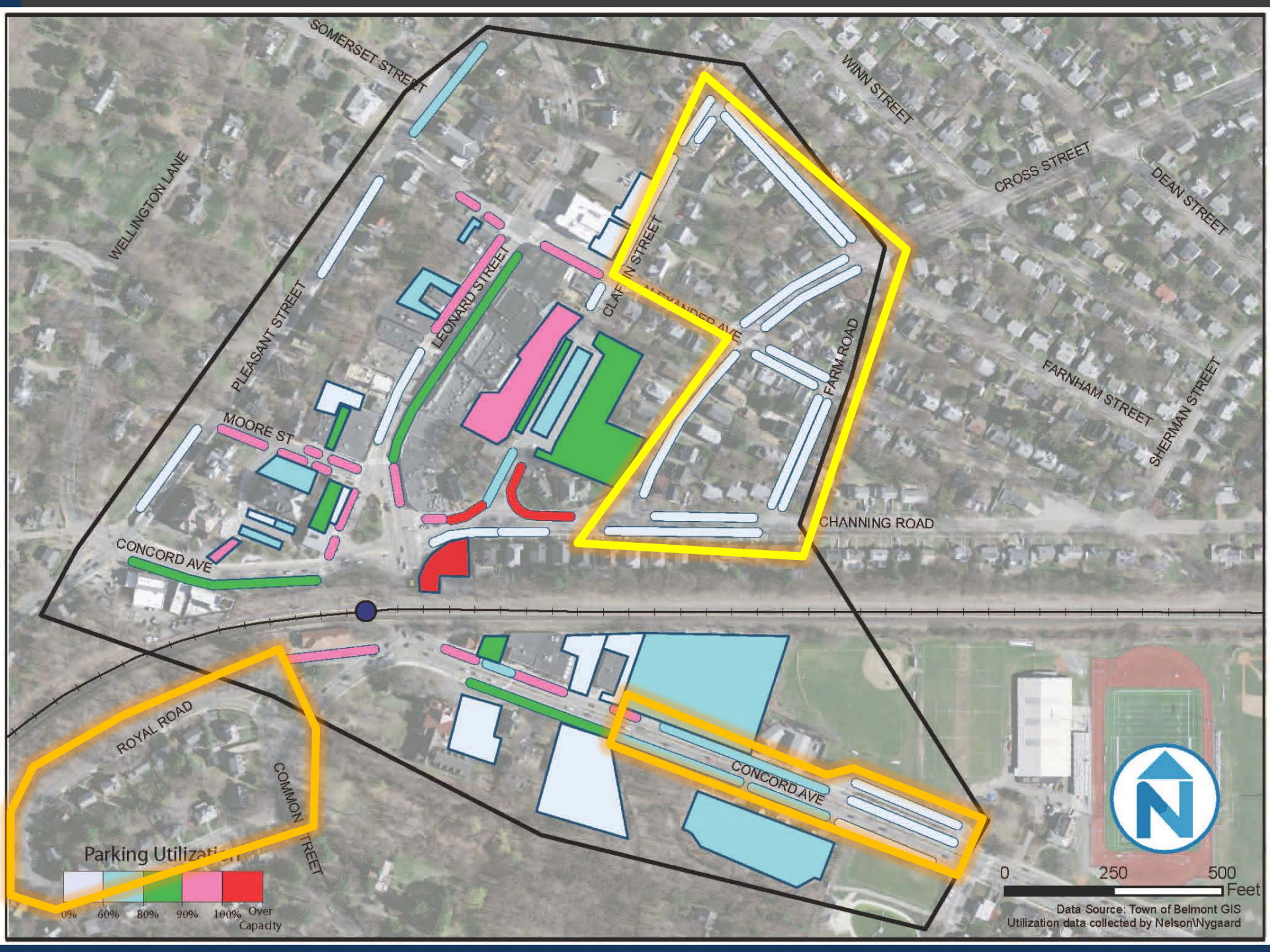
Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts
3. On-street commuter parking

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits
2. Establish more convenient customer parking
3. Introduce commuter parking





Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find
2. Lack of attractive employee parking
3. No designated commuter parking
4. Lack of access/signage

Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts
3. On-street commuter parking

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits
2. Establish more convenient customer parking
3. Introduce commuter parking



Walking Back to Your Car Today











FREE
TWO
HOUR
PARKING



NO PARKING
DURING DECLARED
SNOW EMERGENCY
VEHICLES WILL BE TOWED
IF YOUR VEHICLE IS TOWED
PLEASE CALL (617) 484-1215
FOR INFORMATION

NO
EMPLOYEE
PARKING





Access to Leonard Street



Access to Leonard Street



Access to Leonard Street



Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Prime spaces are difficult to find
2. Lack of attractive employee parking
3. No designated commuter parking
4. Lack of access/signage

Best Practices

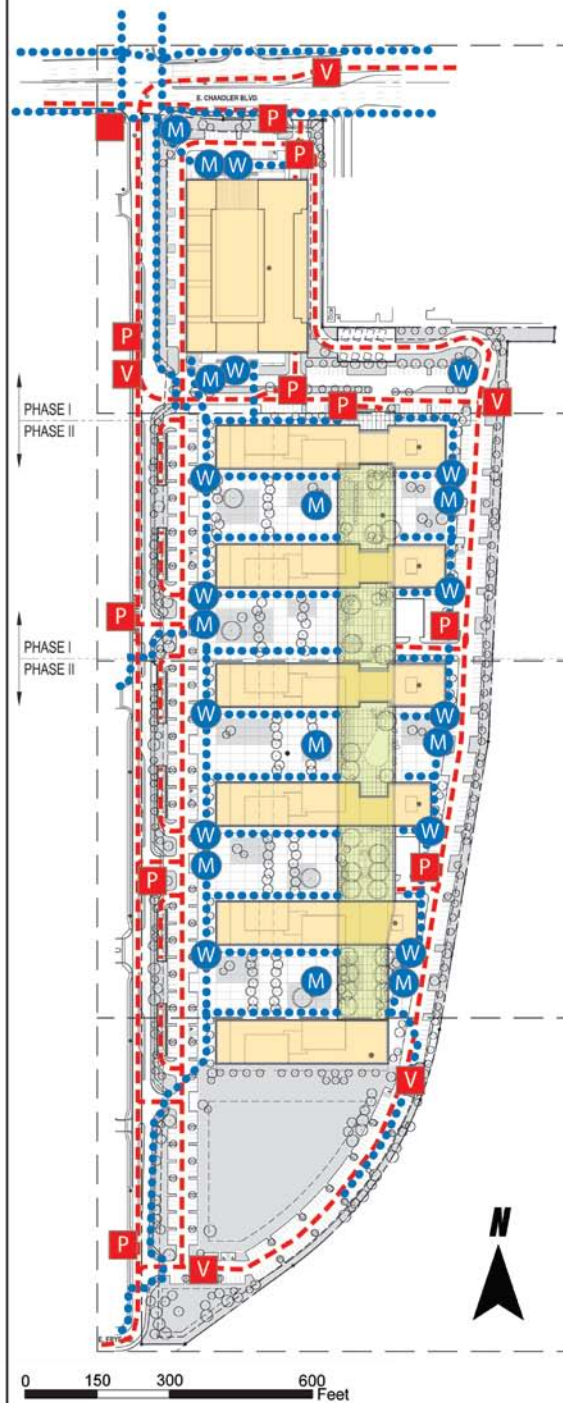
1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts
3. On-street commuter parking
4. Wayfinding and Public Easements

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits
2. Establish more convenient customer parking
3. Introduce commuter parking

Signage





- Vehicular Pathways
- Pedestrian Pathways
- P Parking Signage
- V Vehicular Signage
- W Ped/Walking Signage
- M Map
- Building

Pi Alley Boston



Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Lack of attractive employee parking
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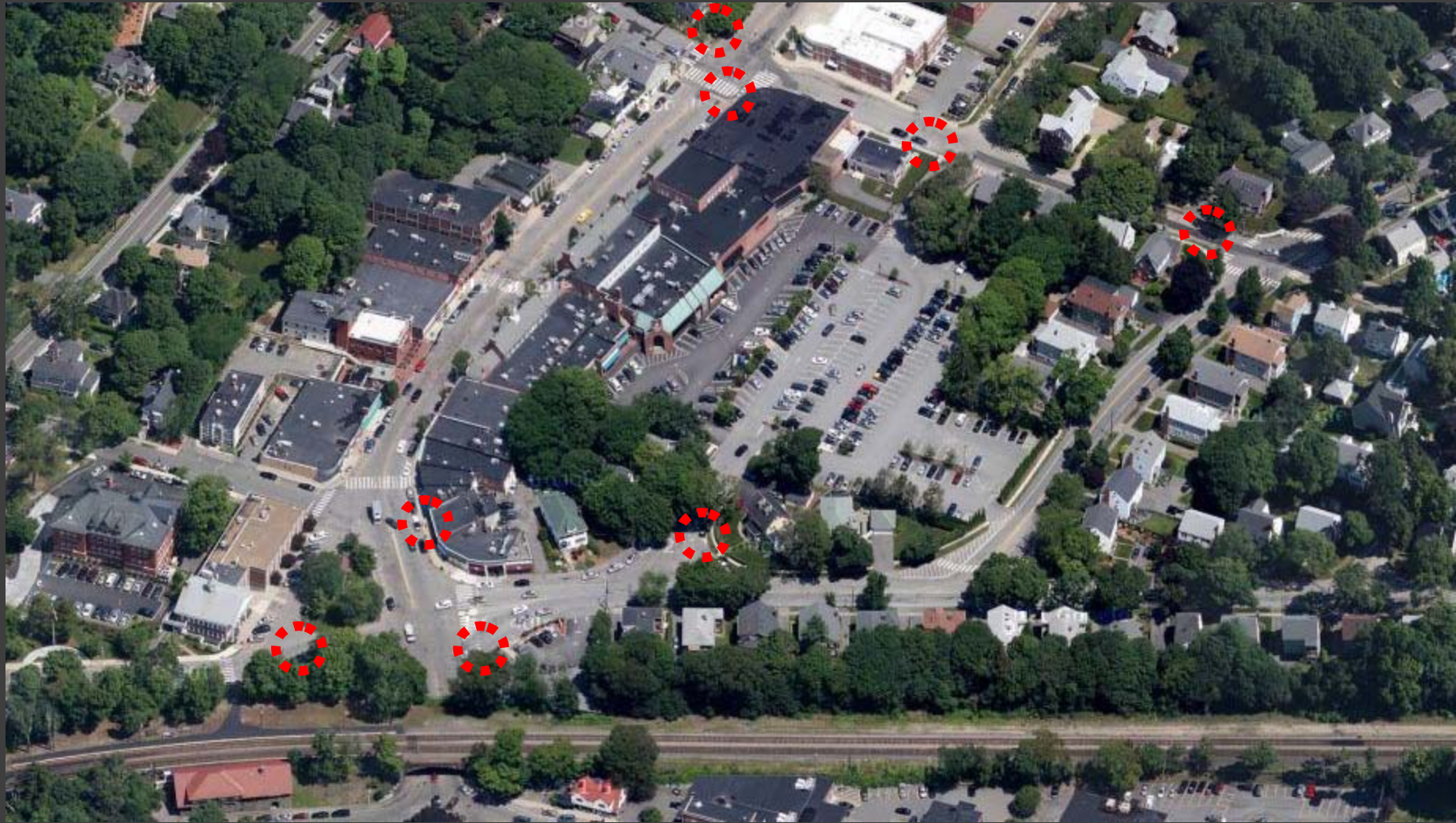
Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts
3. On-street commuter parking
4. Wayfinding and Public Easements

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits
2. Establish more convenient customer parking
3. Introduce commuter parking
4. Improve connections & signing

Recommended Signage Locations

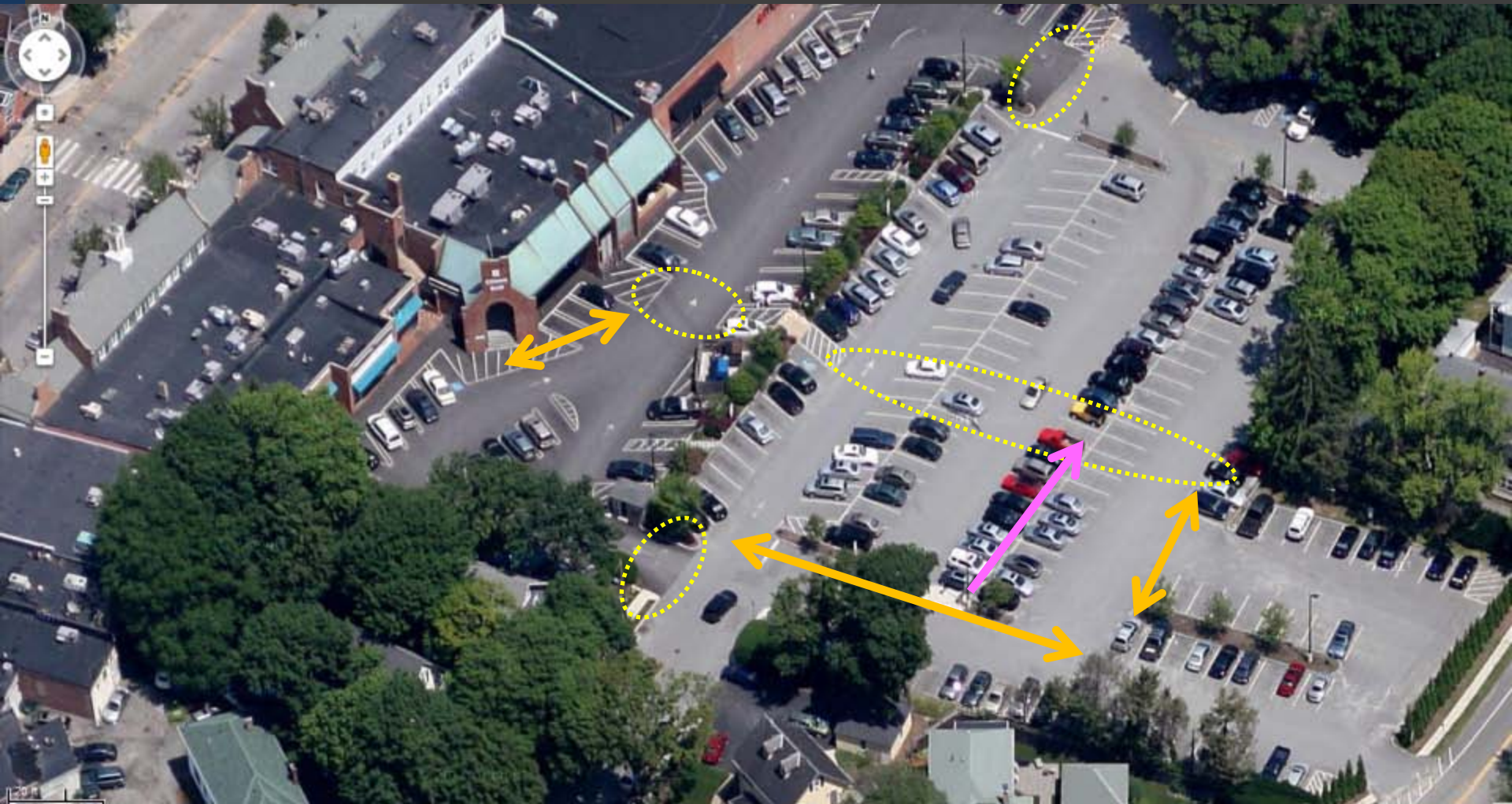


Improve Pedestrian Connections and Signage

- Improve lighting and sidewalks to and within the Claflin Lot
- Install improved crosswalks
- Integrate signage around Belmont Center for drivers



Claflin Lot Pedestrian Connections



Improve Pedestrian Connections and Signage

Identify, sign, and improve connections through one or more buildings



Pedestrian Connections – Streetscape Plan Proposed



Parking Management Plan

Issues

1. Lack of attractive employee parking
2. Prime spaces are difficult to find
3. No designated commuter parking
4. Lack of access/signage
5. Balanced transportation system

Best Practices

1. Demand-responsive parking management
2. Parking benefit districts
3. On-street commuter parking
4. Wayfinding and Public Easements

Recommendations

1. Revise employee permits
2. Establish more convenient customer parking
3. Introduce commuter parking

Unbalanced Transportation System

- New parking supply will be needed in long-term
- Heavy reliance on sufficient off-street parking
- Business loading needs
- Lack of alternatives to the car

Other Issues

- New parking supply will be needed in long-term
 - Heavy reliance on sufficient off-street parking
 - Business loading needs
 - Lack of alternatives to the car
-
- Increase parking supply
 - Encourage Zipcars in Belmont
 - Change loading regulations in selected areas
 - Install bike racks

Other Strategies

- 5. Increase parking supply
 - On-street: Alexander



Other Strategies

5. Increase parking supply

- On-street: Royal and Dunbarton



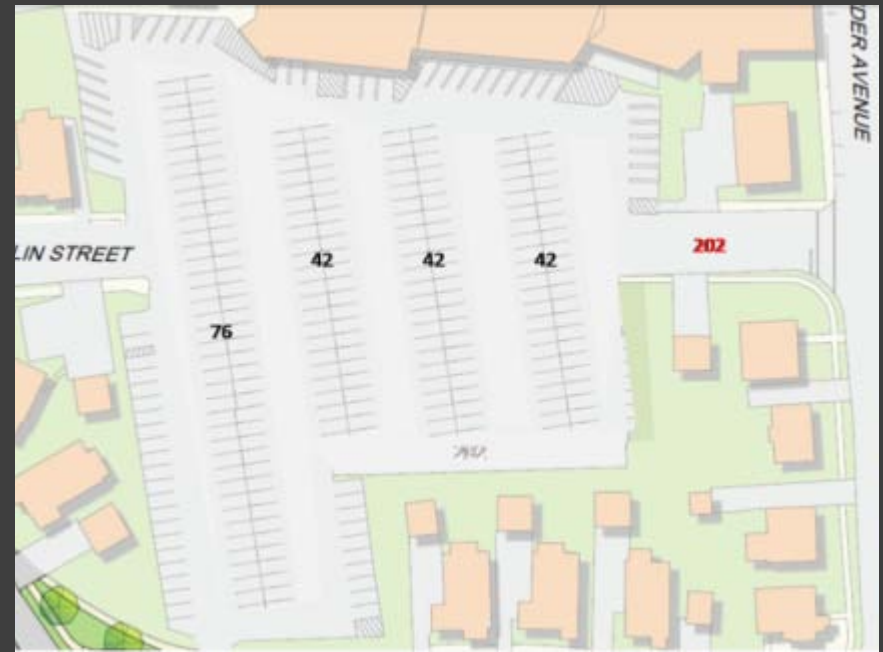
Other Strategies

- 5. Increase parking supply
 - On-street: Leonard



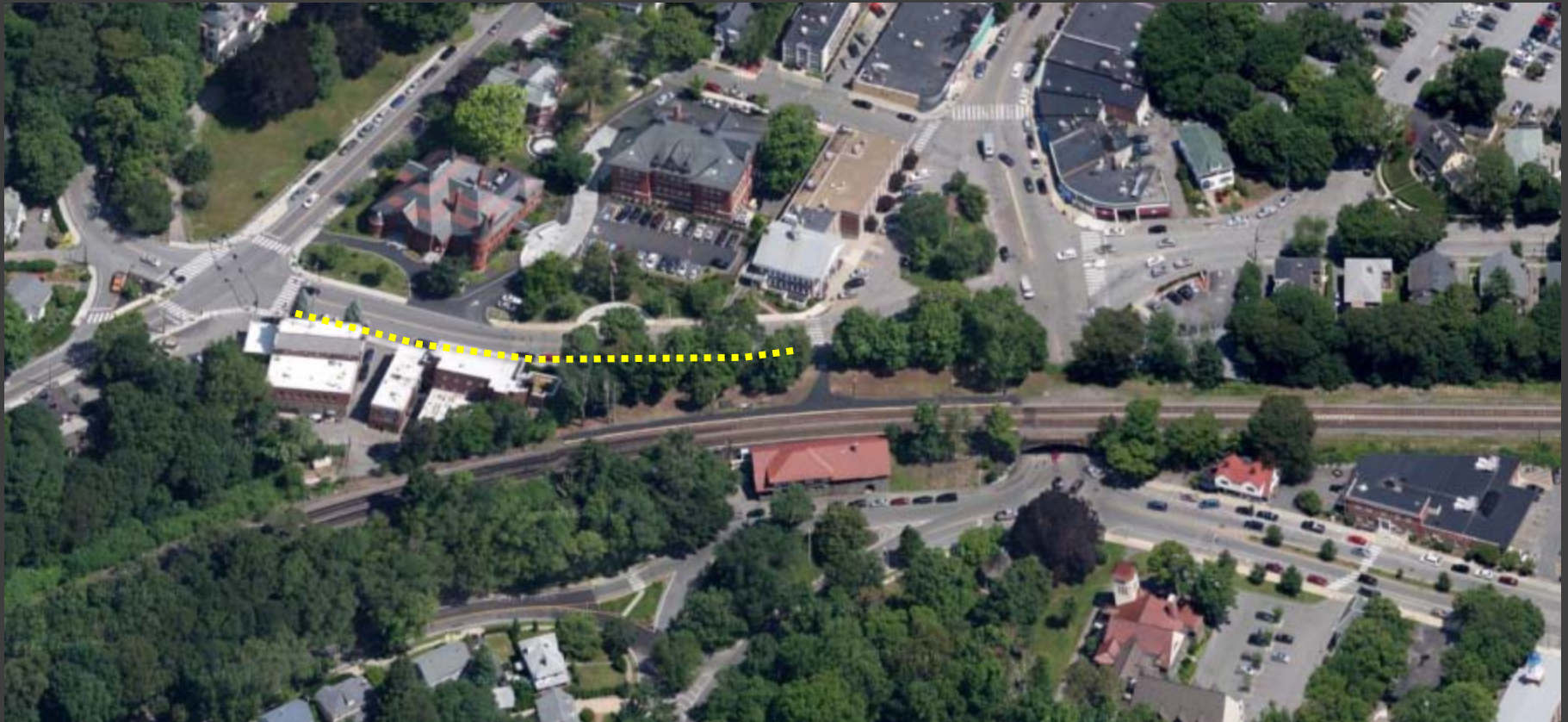
Other Strategies

- 5. Increase parking supply
 - Claflin Lot



Other Strategies

6. Bring More Zipcars to Belmont and Encourage their Use



Other Strategies

7. Change loading regulations in selected areas

- Evaluate loading zone on Leonard Street
- Evaluate restricting trucks to load/unload during designated time periods (i.e. 6am – 9am)



Other Strategies

8. Install bike racks

- ABPB-compliant bike racks
- Incorporate bicycle parking facilities for new developments
- Encourage existing developments to make such improvements



“I would ride to work if there was a safe place to lock my bike.”

A Comprehensive Strategy



Example: Redwood City, CA

- Plagued by traditional parking “problems”:

- 100% utilization on Broadway all day long
- Perception of parking unavailability

- BUT:

- Ample unused parking around the corner from commercial strip
- Peak occupancy 69% in city-owned lots (ideal is 85%); 78% at the height of the dot-com boom



Photo by BWChicago

Example: Redwood City, CA

- City staff asked, “Do we actually have a parking *shortage*, as perceived by motorists, or a parking *management* problem?”
- Decided on a strategy set:
 1. Institute Market-Rate Pricing
 2. Eliminate Time Limits
 3. Convert the Core to Computerized “Pay-by-Space” Meters
 4. Modify the Parking Permit Program

Example: Redwood City, CA

- #1: Institute Market-Rate Pricing
 - Initial starting fee structure set
 - Fee structure set to price most desirable spots the highest
 - Maintain 85% occupancy (by ordinance)
 - Priced differently at highest-use times (Weekdays 10AM-6PM) than at off-peak times





REDWOOD CITY
**Downtown
Parking Map**

**FREE PARKING
EVENINGS &
WEEKENDS**

**County
Garage**

San Mateo
County
Government
Center



LEGEND

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First 4 hours FREE with a validation from Century Theatres
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ALL RATES AND HOURS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

AUGUST 2009

Hours of Operation

Sunday - Thursday

11 AM to 8 PM

Friday - Saturday

11 AM to 12 midnight

Except Holidays

Example: Redwood City, CA

- #2: Eliminate Time Limits
 - Time limits impose an artificial restriction on usage and are inconvenient
 - Enforcement is costly to manage
 - Time limits not efficient at producing even 85% occupancy
 - Allow pricing to create turnover instead

Why Time-Limits Don't Work

- It's free to do the 2-hour roll
- Lessons from U.S. best practices:
 - Why would you give somebody a ticket if they decided to get a dessert and do an errand after lunch?
 - A time-limit effectively says, “you’re no longer welcome in our downtown.”
 - If people are willing to use the “carrot” of paying their way, why drive them away with the “stick” of a violation penalty?



Example: Redwood City, CA

- #3: Convert to Pay-by-Space Meters
 - Able to track occupancy rates and adjust price rates accordingly
 - A host of other benefits:
 - Credit/debit card payment
 - Better urban design
 - Quicker repairs
 - Solar power
 - Better information
 - Revenue control
 - Better data collection
 - Convenience



Source: Digital Payment Technologies, 2005

Example: Redwood City, CA

- #4: Modify the Parking Permit Program
 - To accommodate employees, crafted a parking permit program for spaces in garages with varying levels of access for purchase



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Example: Redwood City, CA

- Program has been highly successful:
 - Greater turnover and parking distributed more evenly across district
 - Average length of stay 72 minutes (previously 1 hour limit)
 - Monthly permit sales up 50%
 - \$1 million in added revenues for added public services such as increased police protection and cleaner sidewalks
 - 82% occupancy on Broadway

Discussion and Next Steps

